

Midwest Conference on Differentiated Instruction

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MC05 **The Mindset That Propels Differentiation (Gr. K-12)**

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Self-Evaluation Checklist – The Differentiation Mindset

Directions: Check the boxes that describe your mindset about differentiation. Use this data to determine your next steps or potential goals to set for growth.

Initial Level Performance

- ☐ I control the learning environment. Students are not empowered to contribute to class rules, projects, creation of rubrics, etc.
- ☐ All students are engaged in the same activity since they all must cover that part of the curriculum.
- ☐ "Success or failure in learning is owned by the student."
- ☐ I don't know the individual students well, just the general make-up of the whole class.
- ☐ I rely on the gifted-talented, special education teachers or learning strategy specialists to plan all instruction for students who have special needs.
- ☐ I believe that some students are just not motivated, and that they choose to be unmotivated.
- ☐ I don't allow students to redo assignments – they just chose not to study and must be allowed to experience the consequences.
- ☐ I don't study daily data – how my students performed based on the outcome (formative assessment process).

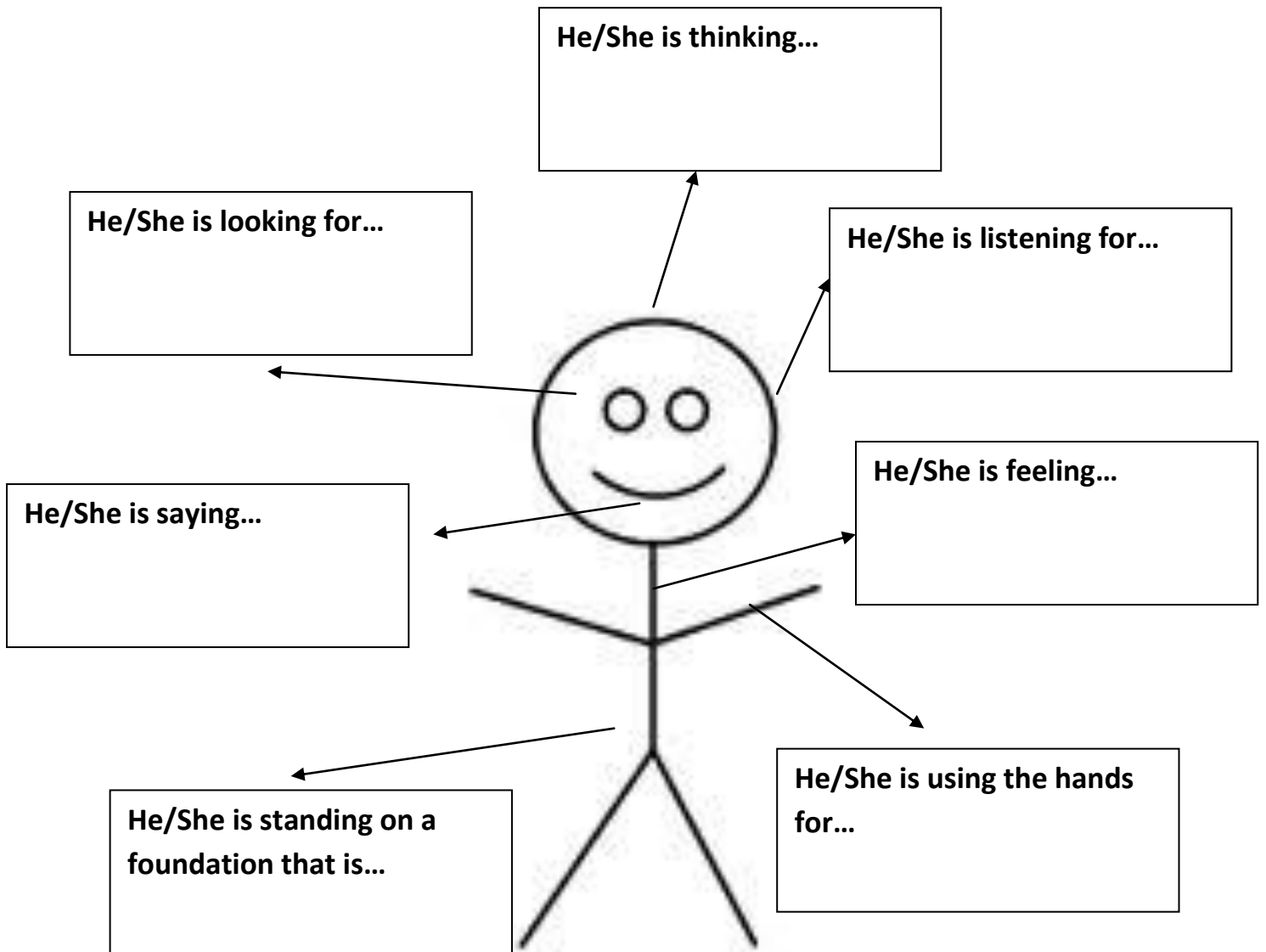
Intermediate Level Performance

- ☐ The students and I share the responsibility of learning and in keeping the classroom culture positive.
- ☐ Students are using instructional resources in different ways and at different paces.
- ☐ Many students experience success daily.
- ☐ I recognize that students differ in readiness levels, interests, and learning preferences, AND I have started to make changes in my classroom instruction based on this belief.
- ☐ I consult with gifted-talented, special education, and learning-strategy specialists to determine the best strategies for certain students.
- ☐ I believe that the level of motivation among my students is related to how much my lesson engages the students.

Advanced Level Performance

- ☐ I am facilitating and coaching students during the learning process. They are exploring, asking questions, using resources, and working independently or cooperatively to achieve their learning objectives.
- ☐ The student is the center of the classroom – his/her differences are considered and instruction is planned accordingly. It's all about EACH student's success with the learning standards (I even allow retaking of tests, quizzes or assignments).
- ☐ I know my students well since I take the time to connect with them personally and get to know them better through Learning Profiles, daily data, interest surveys, and observations.
- ☐ I partner with gifted-talented, special education, and learning-strategy specialists to create the best instructional strategies for my students.
- ☐ I believe that the level of motivation among my students is related to how well I meet their learning needs and how the instruction is physically, cognitively and emotionally engaging.
- ☐ My goal is to engage all students during the learning process.

Describe within each box, the characteristics of “differentiated-mindset” teacher



Name:

Other Descriptions:

All About Mindsets

1. MINDSET - Assumptions, expectations, and beliefs that guide our behavior and our interactions with others.
2. “All good teachers will tell you that the most important quality they bring to their teaching is their love for the children. Before we can teach them, we need to delight in them. Children need one thing to succeed in life: someone who is crazy about them. We need to find a way to delight in all our students. We may be the only one who does. We need to look for the best, expect the best, and find something in each child that we can truly treasure. I am convinced that many learning and social difficulties would disappear if we learned to see the genius in each child and then create a learning environment that encourages it to develop.” **Steven Levy, *Starting from Scratch: One Classroom Builds Its Own Curriculum***.
3. Our reactions to our students are shaped by attitudes that have evolved unconsciously and over time.
4. Some teachers are more comfortable around the quiet, compliant child while others gravitate towards that curious talker who gets excited about learning. The more aware we are of such feelings, the more likely we can deal with them in productive ways.
5. Thoughts are extremely powerful – every cell in your body is affected by every thought you have. That is why when people are emotionally upset, they can feel nauseous, get headaches, or even weaken their immune systems. You can train your thoughts to be more positive. Notice the negative ones and talk back to them. Dr. Daniel Amen says to crush the ANTS (Automatic Negative Thoughts) by replacing the negative talk with a positive statement.
6. “If our attitudes, beliefs, or mindsets about teaching, learning and our students go unexamined, the consequences can be pernicious for some or many of the young people we teach.” Sousa and Tomlinson
7. Example of a mindset to an action: A teacher believes that certain students are inherently lazy or unmotivated. Her negative mindset would have her respond to these students with annoyance. This response sets the stage for a negative learning environment and alters the emotional state of the students. Negative learning environments create stress and intense stress is not good for learning.
8. There are 2 types of mindsets: Growth and Fixed

Differences Between Fixed Mindset and Growth Mindset

	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Belief	Capabilities are primarily seen as inherent talents that are hardly changeable. “I am the way I am”, but still have desire to perform well and look smart.	Capabilities are seen as mutable by effort and effective learning strategies; intelligence can be developed which leads to a desire to learn more.
Tendency	To try to appear as capable as much as possible.	To try to learn and improve as much as possible.
Challenges	Avoid challenges just in case of failure (could tell others they have a lack of talent). They stick to what they know works.	Challenges are embraced because you learn from them and they can lead to growth; they persist through challenges.
View on Effort	Effort is fruitless – why work hard when you basically stay the same afterward.	Effort is necessary in order to grow; sees effort as the path to mastery.
Response to adversity, failure, criticism	Blame others; give up early; stop trying; defensive; could lie about events; mistakes are sometimes not recognized or admitted; ignore any criticism	What did I learn from this failure? What will I do differently next time? Better strategies are tried; inquisitive and interested in changing; eager to learn and open for suggestions or feedback.
View on success of others	Is seen as a threat since these people might be viewed as better as or more talented than them.	Is seen as inspirational and grateful for their talents; wants to learn from others.
Impact on Own Development	Potential is under-utilized; they don’t change much in life.	Potential is developed; Goals are set.
Effect on Other People	Can impede cooperation, feedback, and growth.	Can invite cooperation, feedback and suggestions which can stimulate growth.

Questions for Teachers to Ask Themselves about Their Differentiation Mindset

From: Sousa & Tomlinson (2011). *Differentiation and the Brain*. Solution Tree Press.

1. How comfortable are you with classes that group students by perceived ability?
2. What evidence have you had in your teaching that students who have previously been seen as “not smart” can be quite successful academically as a result of their effort and a teachers’ partnership?
3. When a student does poorly in class, do you ever attribute that to the student’s home or background?
4. In what ways do you demonstrate to your students that they are in charge of their academic success – that their effort is the key to their success?
5. How often do you make comments that emphasize being smart versus working hard?
6. In what ways do you show students that discoveries and insights almost inevitably stem from failures rather than from successes?
7. To what degree do you see a student’s D’s and F’s as inevitable?
8. To what degree do you see a student’s straight A’s as an indicator that the student may not be experiencing appropriate challenge – may not be growing?
9. How do you share your own failures and persistence with students to ensure that they see you as an adult who believes that continued effort will win the day?
10. In what ways do you monitor your students’ mindsets and help them with goal setting and progress monitoring to ensure that each of them will develop a growth mindset about learning and success?
11. What evidence suggests that the learning environment in your classroom supports student-centered thinking and planning?
12. What elements in the environment in your classroom open the way to dealing with student variance in readiness?
13. In what ways does the environment in your classroom tap into and extend student interest?
14. How does the environment in your classroom offer a variety of ways to explore and express ideas?
15. In what ways does the environment in your classroom acknowledge and encourage attention to student differences in language, culture, gender, and economic status?
16. What structures, routines, and procedures do you use to help students understand, accept, value, and support their commonalities and differences as learners?
17. What routines and procedures do you use to help students develop awareness of themselves as learners and consistently increase their skills and habits of mind as effective learners and problem solvers?
18. What structures and procedures do you use to enable students to work collegially and to contribute effectively to a community of learners?
19. To what degree do materials and other resources in your classroom contribute to student engagement, understanding, and success?
20. What indicators suggest the flexible use of space, time, groupings, resources, strategies, and materials in your classroom to address variability in student needs?

The Inner World of Teaching

By: Robert Marzano

Educational Leadership, April 2011

1. People typically operate from well-rehearsed scripts that serve specific purposes.
2. A teacher will continue with his or her current script unless some event interrupts the flow of that script.
3. The manner in which the teacher interprets an interruption dictates his or her behavior from that point on.
4. People have a built-in bias to interpret events negatively.

The Three Big Questions What Should a Teacher Do Then?

1. How am I interpreting this event?
2. Will this interpretation lead to a positive outcome?
3. If not, what's a more useful interpretation?



HOW TO CHANGE MINDSETS

1. Understand the difference between fixed and growth mindsets – educating the self is the first step. Knowing that there is a mindset that makes change more challenging is important for those with a fixed mindset. (Do a bookstudy on Carol Dweck's book: *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*).
2. Spend 15 minutes brainstorming successes that you have accomplished in your life because of your effort.
3. Ask the person to determine his/her strengths in teaching – what he/she does well! Create a long list – it's time to brag!!!!
4. Ask the person to list 1-2 areas in teaching that need improvement. Guide that person through a Goal Setting form. Help him/her to have a detailed plan of action (list support, resources needed, specific strategies needed). Help that person receive this support. Check in once a week – tell him/her you will help.
5. Make sure somebody shows the teachers what this looks like (video, observe another teacher at a different school, observe DI Mentor, etc.)
6. Ask the teacher to take the Mindset Self-Reflection and rate himself/herself. Ask questions to help that person determine whether or not the rating was truthful of his/her beliefs OR just knew the right answer and checked the boxes (this can happen if you don't see yourself as everyone else sees you).
7. Ask the teacher to create a Reflection Journal – one that is written within before he/she leaves for the day. She should reflect on what went well, what didn't go well, how can tomorrow be better, how can the lesson improve, what should be done based on the data today, etc.
8. Researchers say that “we can believe our way into new actions or act our way into new beliefs.” Success breeds success – encourage teachers to TRY the strategy and see the results.
9. Talk back to your negative comments – create mantras that help you oust the automatic negative thoughts that cause your behavior.
10. You have to commit. And commitment can't be in your mind alone – you have to commit with a definitive action. Once you take that action, something almost magical happens. Just taking that action starts the shift, and starts to change your mindset. You will feel different. You will see things differently. You will think totally different about something when you're on the other side of the action you took.

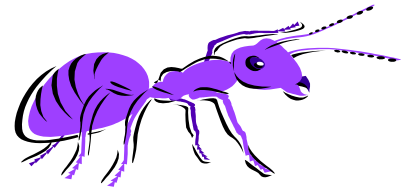
“Mindset Changer” Plan of Action

Name of Teacher: _____ Date: _____	
Evidence of “One-Size Fits All” Mindset	Evidence of Differentiated Mindset
Mindset characteristic that needs immediate attention:	
Goal to accomplish the new mindset:	Strategies to accomplish the goal:
Date Starting: _____ Date Ending: _____ How will the goal be measured?	Resources needed to accomplish the goal:

About My Teacher: _____
From: Anonymous Student in your Classroom

- 1. What are your teacher's strengths?**
- 2. In what areas would you like to see your teacher improve?**
- 3. How does your teacher relate to students?**
- 4. How does your teacher deal with misbehavior?**
- 5. What do you think your teacher likes best about teaching?**
- 6. If your teacher were an animal, which animal would she/he be? Why?**
- 7. What do you think your teacher likes least about teaching?**
- 8. Describe your classroom with 3-4 adjectives (Colorful? Tidy? Organized?):**
- 9. What is the most important thing that your teacher has taught you so far this year?**
- 10. Describe one thing that you'll always remember about being in this teacher's class?**





Dr. Daniel Amen's

Stomping on ANTS = Automatic Negative Thoughts

Common ANTS:

1. All or Nothing Thinking (When you think all bad or all good – nothing in between).
2. “Always” Thinking (When you think something that happened will “always” repeat itself; when you think in words such as: never, no one, everyone, every time, everything).
3. Focusing on the Negative (When you see only the bad in the situation and ignore the good).
4. Fortune Telling (When you predict the worst possible outcome of a situation).
5. Mind Reading (When you know what another person is thinking when they haven’t even told you).
6. Thinking with Your Feelings (When you believe your negative feelings without ever questioning them).
7. Guilt Beatings (When you think in words like “should, must, ought, or have to”).

Steps for Stomping on ANTS:







1. Teach the person: Thoughts lead to the release of chemicals in the brain and you become aware of what you’re thinking. Thoughts affect behaviors.
2. Every time you have a mad, mean, unkind, sad or cranky thought, your brain releases negative chemicals that make your entire body feel badly.
3. Every time you have a good, positive, happy, hopeful or kind thought, your brain releases chemicals that make your body feel good. When we are happy, muscles relax, hearts beat slower, and overall, you feel healthier.
4. You must train yourself to think about your thoughts! Our thoughts are not always correct (“you are stupid, worth nothing,” etc. – these are lies!). Stop and challenge your thoughts (determine if you have an ANT).
5. Train your negative thoughts to become positive thoughts. We choose our thoughts. Talk back to bad thoughts such as: “No, you can accomplish anything you want with time and effort.”
6. Write down the negative thought and then write the positive thought that should replace the negative one. Take away the power of the negative thought.

THE SIX THINKING HATS

A Way to Ask Questions at Different Levels

Concept Created By: Edward DeBono. (1999).

Six Thinking Hats. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.

	<p>WHITE HAT: Facts, information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What do you already know about ... ◆ List the facts that you know about ... ◆ What facts are missing ...
	<p>RED HAT: Feelings, attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ How do you feel about ... ◆ How do you think _____ felt about ... ◆ What is your opinion about ... ◆ What do you feel about doing ...
	<p>YELLOW HAT: Benefits, positive thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What are the benefits of ... ◆ What are the pros of ... ◆ What are the strengths of ... ◆ What do you like about ... ◆ Why will it work in order to ...
	<p>GRAY HAT: judgments, problems, cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What's wrong with ... ◆ What potential problems could arise if ... ◆ What mistakes can you find ... ◆ List the dangers of ... ◆ What is bad about ...
	<p>GREEN HAT: creativity, new ideas, what if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What if _____ didn't happen or did happen ... ◆ What new ideas did you gather from ... ◆ What modifications would you suggest ... ◆ List the possible ways that ... ◆ How might you change ... ◆ How could you combine _____ & _____ ... ◆ What new ideas do you have about improving ...
	<p>BLUE HAT: summary, organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What was the most valuable information that you learned from ... ◆ What should our focus be now ... ◆ What comes next ... ◆ How will you apply ... ◆ Summarize what you learned ...

6 Thinking Hats: DI ANT Busters



White Hat

What does an effective, engaged classroom look like and sound like? How do you define differentiation?



Red Hat

How do you feel about your student achievement right now? Your student engagement? The Joy Factor in your classroom?



Yellow Hat

What are the benefits of when we plan with the students' needs in mind?



Gray Hat

What potential problems could arise if we don't meet their needs?



Green Hat

How might you change your classroom so that more student achievement can occur? More student engagement? More Joy Factor?



Blue Hat

Summarize your next steps after this discussion.

Gray Hat Potential ANTs about Differentiation	Green Hat ANT Buster
1. I can't differentiate instruction because I have to cover the standards for all of the students!	1. The goal for learning is to help develop and use multiple pathways for students to learn whatever we teach – the standards! Differentiation is an instructional approach to get students to the standards!
2. I can't differentiate because the standardized test is not differentiated.	2. Students will do well on the standardized test IF WE differentiate. They must learn the content and skills on that test. Research indicates that students do better on standardized test when they have the opportunity to learn in "preferred modes", even if the test is NOT in their "preferred mode".
3. I can't differentiate instruction because I'm already too busy and have absolutely no extra time for planning.	3. The way we plan must change – it's NOT double the planning but rather, planning with the students' needs in mind and providing strategies to help them get to the target. It will save you time if you plan smarter...less reteaching and less frustration.

4. I can't differentiate because I teach too many students.	4. We use flexible grouping to place students within small groups based on their interests, learning profile, or readiness levels to meet their learning needs. Remember, differentiation is not creating an IEP for each student, but rather determining the best strategies to help students get to the standard and love learning. Just teaching with cognitive science principles is one of the best ways to meet most of your students' needs!
5. I can't differentiate because I have only one textbook, and I have been forced to use this book!	5. Ask the leadership – is this textbook the standards? The curriculum? It should not be! There are so many other ways to receive content (National Geographic books, articles on line, guest speakers, jigsaws from students, video clips that build background knowledge, etc.). We need to be more creative in how we use our media specialists at our school as well. They can help us find the right, high-interest resources to help our students get to the standards!
6. I can't differentiate instruction because I don't have enough space in my classroom.	6. We have found many teachers in this nation doing an amazing job of differentiating in extremely small classrooms. Be creative with how to use the school (media center, hallways with teacher going back and forth, outside when possible, etc.). Supplies can even be stored in nearby closets or even the media center.
7. I can't differentiate instruction because my students will not receive that treatment in college – we must prepare them for the real world.	7. Effective differentiation should absolutely prepare them better for college by ensuring that they learn the content, habits of mind, academic thinking skills, and self-awareness necessary for the higher education. The students will also learn which strategies work best for them in order to learn information. We are helping them be more “metacognitive” about their learning needs so they can choose the best strategies to learn the content on their own in college!
8. OTHER:	

LIST OF RELATED CITATIONS

“The Mindset that Propels Differentiation”

PRESENTED BY STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS (SDE)

BY: LeAnn Nicklesen, M.Ed. (lnickelsen@comcast.net)

Amen, Daniel. (2002). *Mind Coach: How to Teach Kids and Teenager to Think Positive and Feel Good*. Mindworks Press.

Dweck, Carol. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York, NY: Random House.

Marzano, Robert. April 2011 – Educational Leadership. *The Art and Science of Teaching: The Inner World of Teaching*.

Sousa, David and Carol Ann Tomlinson (2011). *Differentiation and the Brain*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

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Tomlinson, Carol Ann. (2010). *Leading & Managing a Differentiated Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.